THE WORLD SERIES OF BLIND BASEBALL

NBBA

BEEP BASEBALL

JULY 28 - AUGUST 4, 2002

Rules of the Game

Games last six innings, with extra innings to break ties. Each team has three outs an inning.

Teams use a 16-inch softball containing a beeping device.

There is no second base. First and third bases are 4-foot-high cylinders containing speakers. The bases are 100 feet from home plate, 10 feet off each foul line.

A batted ball must travel at least 40 feet to be considered fair. If a batter makes contact, a base operator throws a switch that randomly activates a buzzer on one of the two bases.

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IT LOOKS LIKE BASEBALL. There's a ball and a bat. There are fielders, a pitcher, a catcher and a batter at the plate.

But it sure doesn't sound like baseball. The ball beeps and the bases buzz. Spectators don't cheer until the end of the play. This is beep baseball, an entirely original competitive sport that lets visually impaired athletes suit up for a special version of America's favorite pastime.

The 2002 National Beep Baseball World Series will be played in Glenview, Illinois July 28-August 4. More than 350 visually impaired baseball players, representing 18 teams from around the United States and Taiwan, will compete in the round robin tournament. Series play-off games

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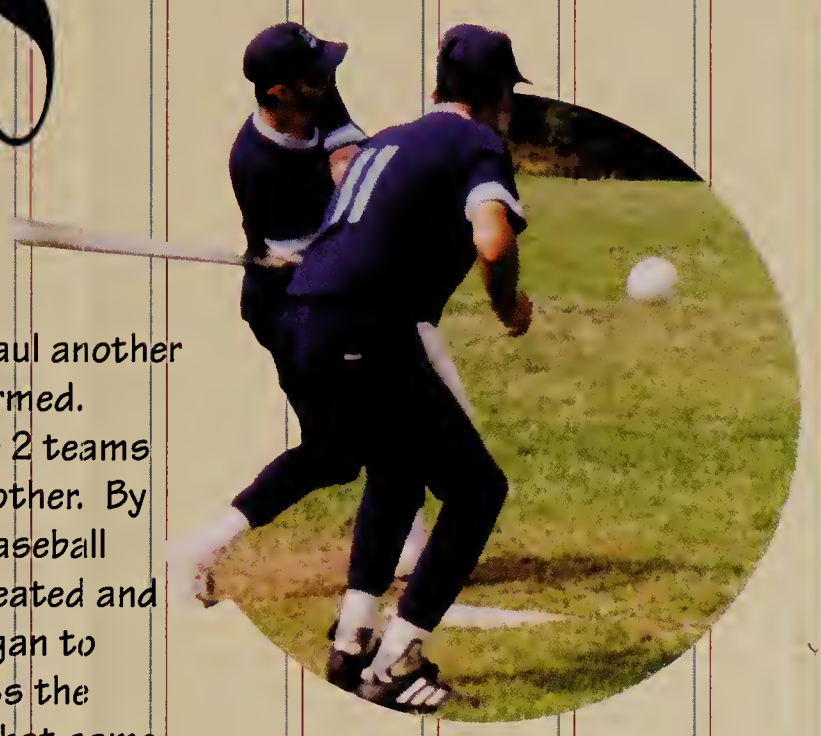
top teams boast several sluggers with batting averages above .500.

Beep baseball also builds the players' mental and physical confidence and creates a bond between sighted and the visually impaired.

In 1964, Charlie Fairbanks, an Engineer with Mountain Bell and a Telephone Pioneer developed the first beep baseball. There in Colorado he implanted a beeping device in a softball as a recreational and educational tool. By the spring of 1975, the Minnesota Telephone Pioneers had presented this "beeping" baseball to a blind athlete in Minneapolis. There in Minneapolis he put together the 1st Beep Baseball team. Then, across the Mississippi River in St. Paul another team was formed. Finally, these 2 teams played each other. By 1976 Beep Baseball rules were created and the game began to spread across the country. In that same year, The National Beep Baseball Association (N.B.B.A.) was created in Chicago. Dedicated volunteers form the backbone of the NBBA's programs, including the annual World Series.

Today, there are many visually impaired athletes enjoying the benefits of playing a sport that used to belong exclusively to the sighted. With the help of sighted volunteers, blind athletes dive onto the ground to stop a beeping baseball or run full speed toward the sound of a buzzing base to score a run!!

Perhaps beep baseball's greatest contribution is the important bridge it is creating between the sighted and visually impaired. Sighted people go away from a beep baseball game with a new appreciation of what blindness is all about. They know they just witnessed a prime example of overcoming a physical handicap. A blind person goes home with the deep satisfaction of knowing with the assistance of a sighted person, that they too can play the great "American Pastime".



The runner must identify the buzzing base and run to it before the ball is fielded by a defensive player. If the runner is safe, a run scores. There is no running from one base to another.

The batter, pitcher and catcher are on the same team, working together to get a hit. The pitcher and catcher for each team are sighted. The catcher sets the target where the batter normally swings. The pitcher — 20 feet from home plate — attempts to place the ball on the hitter's bat. The pitcher must say "ready" just before releasing the ball and "pitch" as it is released.

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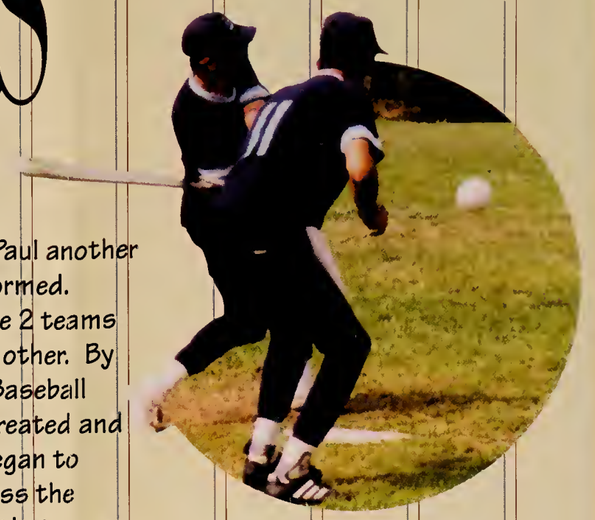

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Beep baseball shares the fundamentals with regular baseball. The beeping ball is hit with a bat and fielded. Once the ball is in play, however, the batter runs down either the first or third base line. If the ball is not fielded by the time the batter finds the base, a run scores. If a fielder gets possession of the ball before the batter reaches the base, the batter is out. (See the Rules of the Game for more details.)

If you like offense, you'll love beep baseball. High scores are the rule, and the top teams boast several sluggers with batting averages above .500.

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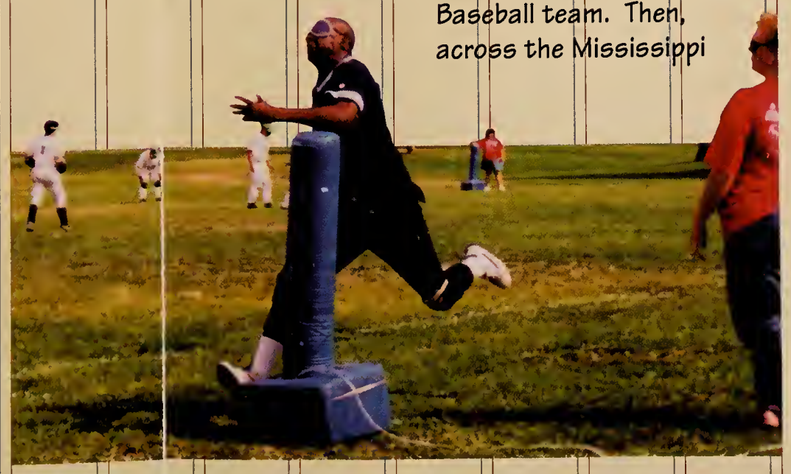

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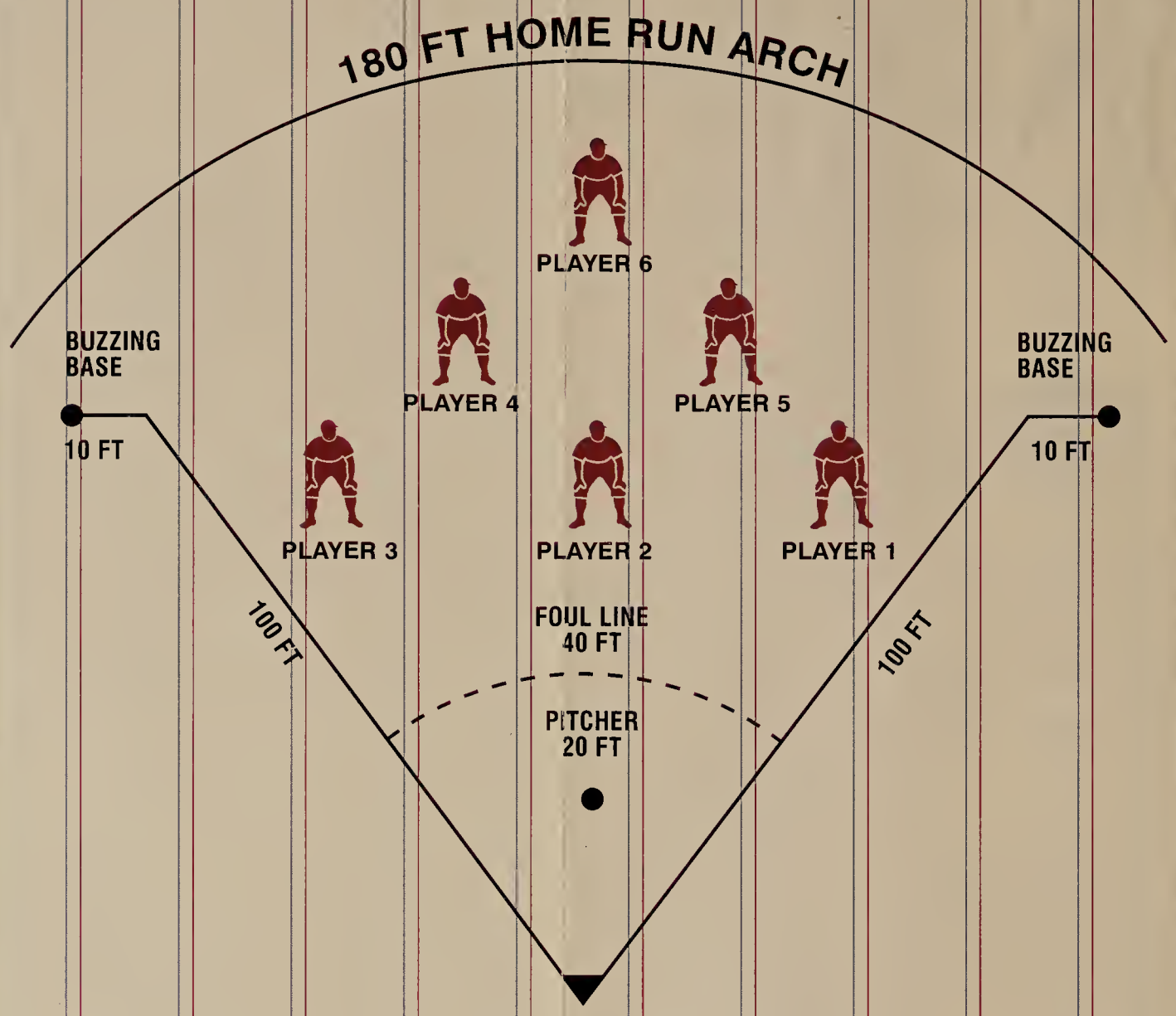
A player does one of three things when batting: hits the ball and is retired by the defense; hits the ball and earns a safe call, which scores a run; or strikes out. Four strikes are allowed, and the last strike must be a clean miss. There are no walks. However, one ball is allowed.

Six players are on defense: a first baseman, a right fielder, a middle fielder, a left fielder, a third baseman and a back fielder.

After a hit, sighted spotters instantly call out a number that lets fielders know the general direction of the ball. The fielders coordinate their defensive moves according to the number called. Spotters can call out only one number, or the batter is awarded a run. Fielders, however, can verbally communicate with each other, and frequently do. A defensive player does not have to throw the ball to another player to record an out. Batters are out if the ball is fielded before they reach the buzzing base.



Beep Baseball's World Series Winners

1976	St. Paul Gorillas
1977	Minneapolis BSF
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1980	Ft. Worth Roadrunners
1981	Albuquerque Tru-Sight
1982	Albuquerque Tru-Sight
1983	Ft. Worth Roadrunners
1984	Albuquerque Tru-Sight
1985	Albuquerque Tru-Sight
1986	Albuquerque Tru-Sight
1987	Albuquerque Tru-Sight
1988	Albuquerque Tru-Sight
1989	Albuquerque Tru-Sight
1990	Indianapolis Eagles
1991	Ft. Worth Roadrunners
1992	Austin Blackhawks
1993	Austin Blackhawks
1994	Austin Blackhawks
1995	Austin Blackhawks
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1997	Austin Blackhawks
1998	Austin Blackhawks
1999	West Coast Dawgs
2000	West Coast Dawgs
2001	West Coast Dawgs

The fielder must have the ball in hand and off the ground to constitute possession and get the batter out.

Because many visually impaired players have some sight, players wear blindfolds.

Excessive noise during the game makes it impossible for the players to hear the ball and bases. Please save your cheers for the end of the play.

N.B.B.A. is a total volunteer organization and volunteers are needed all year long. We have NO "operating costs". Each blind baseball program across the country is strictly funded by the athletes and volunteers themselves. And, just as important as money, all of the programs (teams) across the country are always in need of volunteers who can donate their time to this fascinating sport called Beep Baseball.

For more information about Beep Baseball and N.B.B.A., please see our website: **@ www.nbba.org**